

dogma with fact. But a round peg never fits a square hole. To hide the failure, the devil fish is imitated and a cloud of ink is thrown out to blind the searchers.

It is too often true in every walk in life that the internal man is sacrificed to external fortunes. Would that men would more generally heed the great saying of Socrates :—“ May I esteem the wise man rich, and may I possess only such measure of gold as a wise man can at once bear and use.”

The world needs more unbiassed, broad-minded thinkers, who build upon the solid foundations of extensive personal knowledge of the operations of Nature,—and are ever enthused with love of the truth. To such minds ethical principles founded on experience and Nature’s teaching, and not upon a misty supernaturalism, become a living reality and possess an enduring basis. Scientific study leads the fearless pioneer to the richest ethical and intellectual fields, where he can build his home on the sure foundations of enduring truth. He fears no consequences, but accepts the truth because it is right. Facts become to such men immeasurably more important than popular beliefs, and fear ceases to intimidate, haunt, warp and disturb.

As the forces of Nature take the place of the gods in all the operations of the cosmos, so in the political world the collective will of the people displaces the kings. A government by natural laws leaves no room for divine interference, as a government by the people tolerates no kings. Kings claim to rule by divine right,—and must disappear with their divinities. To be really free the people must rid themselves of both gods and kings. The fear of either—enslaves, and needlessly and harmfully taxes brain and hand.

There is an irrepressible conflict between Science and

religion. They are as incompatible as oil and water. Those among us who know the truth have a duty to perform for ourselves, our generation, and for those who are to follow. We owe fidelity to the truth. It should be our endeavor and pride to assist in clearing our times from the charge that this is the age of hypocrisy.

Our zeal should be tempered with justice and tolerance. The history of the Church is a chapter of horrors. The minister spends his time relieving some evils and making others. There is no danger of our falling into their ways. The methods of Science, Reason and Free-thought are as much superior to theirs as the latest printing press is to a notched stick ; and for the same reason,—it marks a higher plane of evolution.

One of the most encouraging signs of the times is the evidence of the disintegration of the Church. Like a crumbling block it has passed the culminating point of its life, and like everything else that is amenable to the general laws of evolution it is falling asunder,—into hundreds of sects, each in its turn tending toward sub-divisions. This familiar evidence of decay cannot escape notice.

The orthodox of to-day would have been persecuted as heretics half a century ago. Those most interested will be content if they can rescue from the sinking wreck of Theology, the shadowy idea of an intelligent creative force ; a tacit belief in the immortality of the soul ; and the continuance under any pretext of the organizations that bring to them power and profit.

When man comes to know himself as he is revealed by Science, will he continue to war upon his kind with gun and greed ? Will the few continue to hold the many in fear and under tribute ? We trust not. The tendency of true knowledge, and the mental and moral culture and development that go with it, is to lead mankind toward altruistic principles. Self-reliance, with unre-

stricted opportunities, and the trained spirit of truth and justice will finally banish the necessity for alms-giving and alms-taking, with their admittedly evil effects. There will be true freedom when each person may be entirely independent in living and in thought, and still unselfish, and mindful of the general good.

Imagine the absurdity of a few aggregated atoms, mostly hydrogen and carbon, inclosed in a human skin of the same material, warring fiercely with another skin-full of chemicals over an evanescent inconsequential crumb. Such are the results of the selfishness and ambitions of men. This had been justifiable in the early stages of evolution when the struggle was one for bare subsistence. It can never be justified where it is done to gratify greed and glory.

Imagine an ant, so far forgetting the customs of its fraternal community, as to hoard up for itself a store of dead insects, or establish a monopoly in aphides. How ridiculous it would appear to unprejudiced observers, when putting on style, clambering upon, and generally assuming superiority over its less greedy and therefore less prosperous brethren. There can be very little or no difference in principle between the same class of actions, whether performed by ants, swine or men.

Science whispers in our ears a broad lesson of our own littleness, and our duties to ourselves, our kind, and to all animated organisms. Our lives should be shaped along the lines of our best capabilities. For the good of the future of the nations and the race—the old hoarding instinct should be confined within the limits of reasonable needs. Lavish expenditure also has its dangers. The squirrel commendably makes provision for the winter supply; but his starving enemies would be numerous if he so far forgot equal rights as to hoard without limit. Empty stomachs have no consciences.

There is always a yearning for free thought, free speech, and free action. Repression in any form, however polite and velvety, can not always succeed. Bottle up chemicals or men and sooner or later they will burst their bonds. The tighter they are sealed the greater the danger. The reaction is inevitable, and its result sure. As well attempt to permanently repress any other awakening energy of the Universe.

It cannot be prevented,—it may be delayed for the time ; but the march of the army of Science is onward and upward. As sure as the worlds revolve—the time will come when men shall be no longer bound to a dead past. Regenerated and disenthralled, life's swift passage will be a pleasant and happy journey, through useful, ornate and peaceful paths, with overflowing love and fraternal kindness on every side.

The only solid foundation for a roseate faith in the future lies in the truth of evolutionary Science. When the gain of the past is known to be founded on true, eternal, and unchangeable natural principles, predictions of future progress assume mathematical certainty.

Although mental action may be considered as automatic, yet there is a natural power of internal selection which may be exercised along the lines of external natural selection and lead to more rapid evolution. The struggle to become better, wiser and happier is fully justified.

The insanity of greed and supernaturalism is sure to give way, sooner or later, before the triumphant march of scientific sanity. The sun-light of truth and freedom shall surely dissipate the fogs of error and fear ;—and equality, fraternity, hope and love, radiating happiness to a long suffering world—shall stand secure upon a pedestal as broad and enduring as the Universe.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

IN the broadest sense, a book is a product of evolution ; and in a more restricted sense it is still a growth. There are no exceptions.

Many books have contributed, directly, or indirectly, more or less, to the facts and ideas set forth in the foregoing pages. In the way of acknowledgment, and to assist the student who wishes to become better acquainted with the facts relating to the human species and other branches of science, some of the authors are here specially mentioned.

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Above, and including all others, is the book that contains all there is that is true,—*The Book of Nature*: the pages, of which everywhere present, are invitingly open to all mankind. Each person knows something of Nature, and in a scientific way, and clearer comprehension is within reach of every earnest and honest investigator.

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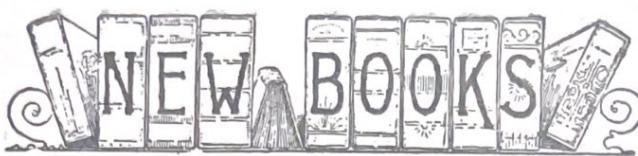
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